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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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100 Days of Summer HEAT Campaign Shifts
Focus to Impaired Drivers Starting This Weekend
6 Sobriety checkpoints scheduled...additional enforcement
important after deadly week on DE roads

Dover – This weekend Delaware Office of Highway Safety and law enforcement officials move into phase two of their “120 Days of Summer HEAT” initiative with the launch of the 2008 *Checkpoint Strikeforce* impaired driving prevention campaign. Six DUI checkpoints are scheduled to be conducted at locations across the state.

Checkpoint Strikeforce is a regional sobriety checkpoint campaign aimed at arresting DUI offenders, and using a high visibility enforcement presence to deter those who would otherwise choose to drink and drive. The campaign, now in its seventh year, involves setting up weekly DUI checkpoints statewide. During the 2007 campaign officers arrested 607 people in six months for DUI.

Currently, alcohol-related fatalities are down significantly in Delaware. Sixteen of this year’s 58 traffic deaths (28%) have been alcohol-related. At this time last year, 28 of the state’s 59 fatalities (47%) involved alcohol.

“Sustained monthly DUI enforcement and awareness efforts over the last six months have no doubt contributed to the current decline in alcohol-related deaths,” said Tricia Roberts, Director of the Office of Highway Safety. “Now as we head into the height of the summer season, stepped up weekly enforcement of the state’s DUI laws is needed to keep the number of impaired driving deaths down.”

Unfortunately, though alcohol-related deaths are down, the number of overall traffic deaths in Delaware is climbing quickly. In the last week 9 people lost their lives in crashes on First State roadways.

“We hope the additional police presence on our roadways will stem this deadly tide,” adds Roberts. “In two weeks we will be adding even more officers on the roads to address another serious highway safety problem: speeding.”

Over the next six months, approximately 120 sobriety checkpoints are scheduled to occur over the next six months ending with six on New Year’s Eve. The number of participating agencies for this year’s *Checkpoint Strikeforce* campaign has changed slightly. The Delaware State Police, Dover Police, and Millsboro Police will continue to operate checkpoints, as will the New Castle County DUI Task Force. In Kent and Sussex Counties, instead of utilizing the Task Force model this year, individual police departments with statistically identified alcohol-related crash problems in their jurisdictions will join the previously mentioned agencies in conducting checkpoints. These departments include Smyrna & Clayton Police working jointly, Milford Police, Georgetown Police, Rehoboth Beach Police and Laurel & Seaford Police working jointly.

The following checkpoints are scheduled for the weekend of June 27th:

Friday June 27th – Wilmington (NcCo DUI Task Force
Smyrna (Smyrna & Clayton PD’s)
Georgetown (Georgetown PD)
Saturday June 28th - Dover (DSP Troop 3)
Millsboro (Millsboro PD)
Laurel (Seaford & Laurel PD’s)

As part of the 2008 Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign, OHS will implement its Dedicated DUI Checkpoint initiative for the second year in a row. The program involves dedicating a DUI checkpoint to the memory of an individual killed in an alcohol-related crash. The intention is to honor and pay tribute to victims, educate the community and provide support for family members and friends of impaired driving victim.

OHS will also continue to promote the HERO Campaign for Designated Drivers. The HERO Campaign was founded by the family of the late Ensign John Elliott, who was killed in a tragic accident involving a DUI suspect in 2000. Efforts will include partnering with Delaware restaurants and bars to provide free drinks to designated drivers, and awareness activities at college football games.

For more information on the *Checkpoint Strikeforce* campaign including updated enforcement statistics, visit www.ohs.delaware.gov.

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